

The Awesomeness Of God

Psalms 36:5-10

Words are cheap these days. We can't guarantee their meaning any more.

Years ago, a certain brand of washing powder added the word "new" to their packet. They had probably changed their recipe. Then for many years the word "new" remained, though it wasn't "new" any more! More recently, the TV advertised sensation, "My Pillow," got into trouble with the Better Business Bureau for its ongoing "Buy One, Get One Free" promotion. It seems that, sooner or later, either the promotion must end or the "half price" deal reflects the actual price of the item.

These days products are advertised as the "ultimate". That used to mean that this was the end of the line - there never could be any further advance and nothing could ever be better. Now the inference is simply that the product is good and that hopefully you will believe it is better than the others. The manufacturers are already planning improvements.

Another word that has been "cheapened" is "precious". The principal meaning has been "of inestimable worth, beyond valuation, invaluable". It is now so often used simply to mean "extremely amusing or ridiculous".

The Psalmist says, "Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds... How precious is your steadfast love." (Ps. 36.5,7a). God wants to reach us on the basis of his goodness, his loving-kindness, his covenant love... God always intended to enter into a relationship with humankind. We aren't meant to be separated from him. To experience his judgment is a consequence of human sin, not God's original intention.

God means us to know his priceless unfailing love - finding "refuge in the shadow of your wings", feasting "on the abundance of your house", drinking "from your river of delights" (vv. 7b-8). This is life as it is meant to be. How often do you and I settle for something less?

C. S. Lewis, from "The Weight of Glory" - If we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in the slum because he can not imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."

This morning we are going to look into the Psalms and discover some of God's characteristics that we just may be overlooking from day-to-day. In the middle of Psalm 36, the psalmist describes the qualities of God as...

Overflowing (vv. 5-6)

Sheltering (vv. 7-9), and...

Continuing (v. 10)

I. Body

A. Overflowing Qualities of God (vv. 5-6)

a) **In so many areas He is more than enough**

1. Mercy

- a) Steadfast love, covenant love, unfailing love, goodness or kindness.
- b) Hebrews 4:16 – Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.
- c) God's love is too strong for anything to conquer
Romans 8:35-39 - Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

2. Faithfulness -- steadiness, unchangeability

3. Righteousness -- from the word for "to make things right."

4. Justice -- decisions, laws and ordinances

- a) Romans 11:33 -- Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

5. overflowing to all

- a) Psalm 145: 9, 15-16 -- The LORD is good to all,
and his mercy is over all that he has made..... The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing.
- b) Nehemiah 9:6 -- "You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you.

B. Sheltering Qualities of God (vv. 7-9)

a) **The place to go in times of trouble**

1. "In the Shadow of your wings". What does this mean?
 - a) a. Remember the time in the N.T. when Jesus had entered Jerusalem on a donkey and the people were waving palm branches & shouting, "Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord." (John 12:13)
 - b) The Pharisees demanded that Jesus tell the people to shut up. He said if they shut up the rocks will cry out.
 - c) Later Jesus looked up at the temple and said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!" -- (Matt. 23:37)
 - d) Jesus used the term, "how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings" as a way of saying I would have protected you just as a hen protects her chicks. I would have taken you under My wings and nothing could touch you without touching Me first."
2. Trust -- to seek refuge, flee for protection
3. Satisfied -- to have one's fill
4. Your house = communion with God
 - a) Psalm 91:1 -- He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
 - b) Psalm 23:6 -- Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life;
And I will dwell[a] in the house of the LORD
Forever.
 - c) Psalm 27:4 -- One thing I have desired of the LORD,
That will I seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the LORD
All the days of my life...
5. Pleasures -- luxury, delicacies, delights (a picture of Eden)
6. Fountain -- a spring, the source

C. Continuing Qualities of God (v. 10)

a) **from everlasting to everlasting**

1. to those that know
 - a) to know by experience
 - b) to acknowledge and confess
2. to the upright in heart
 - a) righteous, just
3. continue = to draw out, prolong
 - a) Gill says = to a greater length: larger, higher, clearer, deeper
4. A construction crew was building a new road through a rural area, knocking down trees as it progressed. A superintendent noticed that one tree had a nest of birds who couldn't yet fly and he marked the tree so that it would not be cut down. Several weeks later the superintendent came back to the tree. He got into a bucket truck and was lifted up so that he could peer into the nest. The fledglings were gone. They had obviously learned to fly. The superintendent ordered the tree cut down. As the tree crashed to the ground, the nest fell clear and some of the material that the birds had gathered to make the nest was scattered about. Part of it was a scrap torn from a Sunday school pamphlet. On the scrap of paper were these words: He careth for you.
5. Lamentations 22-23 -- The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.
6. Review
 - a) Overflowing
 - b) Sheltering
 - c) Continuing

II. Conclusion

- A. A little boy who lived far out in the country in the late 1800s had reached the age of twelve and had never in all his life seen a circus. You can imagine his excitement, when one day a poster went up at school announcing that on the next Saturday a traveling circus was coming to the nearby town. He ran home with the glad news and the question, "Daddy, can I go?" Although the family was poor, the father sensed how important this was to the lad. "If you do your Saturday chores ahead of time," he said, "I'll see to it that you have the money to go."
- B. Come Saturday morning, the chores were done and the little boy stood by the breakfast table, dressed in his Sunday best. His father reached down into the pocket of his overalls and pulled out a dollar bill-the most money the little boy had possessed at one time in all his life. The father cautioned him to be careful and then sent him on his way to town.
- C. The boy was so excited, his feet hardly seemed to touch the ground all the way. As he neared the outskirts of the village, he noticed people lining the streets, and he worked his way through the crowd until he could see what was happening. Lo and behold, it was the approaching spectacle of a circus parade! The parade was the grandest thing this lad had ever seen. Caged animals snarled as they passed, bands beat their rhythms and sounded shining horns, midgets performed acrobatics while flags and ribbons swirled overhead. Finally, after everything had passed where he was standing, the traditional circus clown, with floppy shoes, baggy pants, and a brightly painted face, brought up the rear. As the clown passed by, the little boy reached into his pocket and took out that precious dollar bill. Handing the money to the clown, the boy turned around and went home. What had happened? The boy thought he had seen the circus when he had only seen the parade!
- D. Are you experiencing all that God has for you? The Christian life is a marvelous adventure, an exciting journey. Many people-including Christians-seem to be content to float in a sea of mediocrity. They are settling for second best. Do you want the abundant life that Jesus promised? Do you want to live life to its fullest? Then aim higher. Don't set your sights too low. Determine to become all that God wants you to be... All that He created you to be. Give all of yourself to Christ, follow Him completely, and allow God's Spirit to work in you and through you. Do you want that today?